

What is claimed is:

1. A method of determining whether to develop products, such as software products or hardware products, for potential customers, such as different types of  
5 helicopters, comprising:

identifying a plurality of potential products;

identifying a plurality of potential customers;

determining for each of the potential products all possible implementation combinations in which at least  $n$  of the potential customers implement the product,

10 where  $n$  is a positive whole number;

determining the probability of each such combination;

deciding, based upon the probability determinations, which of the potential products to develop;

developing the products so decided.

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2. A method as set forth in claim 1 wherein the step of identifying a plurality of potential products comprises identifying a plurality of potential software products or potential hardware products.

20 3. A method as set forth in claim 1 wherein the step of identifying a plurality of potential customers comprises identifying a plurality of different types of helicopters.

4. A method as set forth in claim 1 wherein the step of deciding which of the potential products to develop comprises:

combining, for each potential product, the probabilities of the implementation combinations for the potential product such that each potential product has a corresponding probability combination; and

ranking the probability combinations.

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5. A method as set forth in claim 4 wherein:

the step of deciding which of the potential products to develop further comprises determining a threshold probability combination value; and

the step of developing the product comprises developing each product whose  
10 corresponding probability combination is equal to or greater than the threshold probability combination value.

6. A method as set forth in claim 4 wherein the step of combining, for each potential product, the probabilities of the implementation combinations for the  
15 potential product comprises:

adding together the probabilities of the implementation combinations for the potential product.

7. A method as set forth in claim 1 further comprising:

20 determining, for each one of at least a plurality of the potential products and for each one of at least a plurality of the potential customers, the probability of the potential customer implementing the potential product.

8. A method as set forth in claim 7 wherein the step of determining the

probability of the potential customer implementing the potential product comprises:

determining a requirability probability, the requirability probability being the probability that the potential customer requires the potential product;

5 determining an affordability probability, the affordability probability being the probability that the potential customer is willing to pay for the potential product;

determining an availability probability, the availability probability being the probability that the potential product is available to the potential user.

9. A method as set forth in claim 8 wherein the step of determining the  
10 probability of the potential customer implementing the potential product comprises multiplying together the requirability probability, the affordability probability, and the availability probability.

10. A method as set forth in claim 1 further comprising:

15 determining, for each one of the potential products and for each one of the potential customers, the probability of the potential customer implementing the potential product.

11. A method as set forth in claim 10 wherein the step of determining the  
20 probability of the potential customer implementing the potential product comprises:

determining a requirability probability, the requirability probability being the probability that the potential customer requires the potential product;

determining an affordability probability, the affordability probability being the probability that the potential customer is willing to pay for the potential product;

determining an availability probability, the availability probability being the probability that the potential product is available to the potential customer.

12. A method as set forth in claim 10 wherein the potential products are  
5 potential software products.

13. A method comprising:  
identifying a plurality of potential software products;  
identifying a plurality of potential software customers;  
10 determining for each of the potential software products all possible  
implementation combinations in which at least n of the potential software customers  
implements the software product, where n is a positive whole number;  
determining the probability of each such combination;  
deciding, based upon the probability determinations, which of the potential  
15 software products to develop;  
developing the software products so decided.

14. A method as set forth in claim 13 wherein the step of deciding which of  
the potential software products to develop comprises:  
20 combining, for each potential software product, the probabilities of the  
implementation combinations for the potential software product such that each  
potential software product has a corresponding probability combination; and  
ranking the probability combinations.

15. A method as set forth in claim 14 wherein:

the step of deciding which of the potential software products to develop further comprises determining a threshold probability combination value; and

the step of developing the software products comprises developing each  
5 software product whose corresponding probability combination is equal to or greater than the threshold probability combination value.

16. A method as set forth in claim 14 wherein the step of combining, for each potential software product, the probabilities of the implementation combinations for  
10 the potential software product comprises:

adding together the probabilities of the implementation combinations for the potential software product.

17. A method as set forth in claim 13 further comprising:

15 determining, for each one of at least a plurality of the potential software products and for each one of at least a plurality of the potential software customers, the probability of the potential software customer implementing the potential software product.

20 18. A method as set forth in claim 17 wherein the step of determining the probability of the potential software customer implementing the potential software product comprises:

determining a requirability probability, the requirability probability being the probability that the potential software customer requires the potential software

product;

determining an affordability probability, the affordability probability being the probability that the potential software customer is willing to pay for the potential software product;

5 determining an availability probability, the availability probability being the probability that the potential software product is available to the potential software user.

10 19. A method as set forth in claim 18 wherein the step of determining the probability of the potential software customer implementing the potential software product comprises multiplying together the requirability probability, the affordability probability, and the availability probability.

20. A method as set forth in claim 13 further comprising:

15 determining, for each one of the potential software products and for each one of the potential software customers, the probability of the potential software customer implementing the potential software product.

20 21. A method as set forth in claim 20 wherein the step of determining the probability of the potential software customer implementing the potential software product comprises:

determining a requirability probability, the requirability probability being the probability that the potential software customer requires the potential software product;

determining an affordability probability, the affordability probability being the probability that the potential software customer is willing to pay for the potential software product;

5 determining an availability probability, the availability probability being the probability that the potential software product is available to the potential software user.

22. A method comprising:

identifying a plurality of potential software products;

10 identifying a plurality of potential software customers;

determining, for each one of at least a plurality of the potential software products and for each one of at least a plurality of the potential software customers, the probability of the potential software customer implementing the potential software product;

15 deciding, based upon the probability determinations, which of the potential software products to develop;

developing the software products so decided.

20 23. A method as set forth in claim 22 wherein the step of determining the probability of the potential software customer implementing the potential software product comprises:

determining a requirability probability, the requirability probability being the probability that the potential software customer requires the potential software product;

determining an affordability probability, the affordability probability being the probability that the potential software customer is willing to pay for the potential software product;

5 determining an availability probability, the availability probability being the probability that the potential software product is available to the potential software user.

24. A method as set forth in claim 23 wherein the step of determining the probability of the potential software customer implementing the potential software  
10 product comprises multiplying together the requirability probability, the affordability probability, and the availability probability.

25. A method comprising:

identifying a plurality of potential products;

15 identifying a plurality of potential customers;

determining, for each one of at least a plurality of the potential products and for each one of at least a plurality of the potential customers, the probability of the potential customer implementing the potential product;

20 deciding, based upon the probability determinations, which of the potential products to develop;

developing the products so decided.

26. A method as set forth in claim 25 wherein the step of determining the probability of the potential customer implementing the potential product comprises:



determining a requirability probability, the requirability probability being the probability that the potential customer requires the potential product;

determining an affordability probability, the affordability probability being the probability that the potential customer is willing to pay for the potential product;

5        determining an availability probability, the availability probability being the probability that the potential product is available to the potential user.

27. A method as set forth in claim 26 wherein the step of determining the probability of the potential customer implementing the potential product comprises  
10       multiplying together the requirability probability, the affordability probability, and the availability probability.

28. A method as set forth in claim 25 wherein the step of determining, for each one of at least a plurality of the potential products and for each one of at least a  
15       plurality of the potential customers, the probability of the potential customer implementing the potential product comprises:

20       determining, for each one of the potential products and for each one of the potential customers, the probability of the potential customer implementing the potential product.

29 A method as set forth in claim 28 wherein the step of determining, for each one of the potential products and for each one of the potential customers, the probability of the potential customer implementing the potential product comprises:

      determining a requirability probability, the requirability probability being the

probability that the potential customer requires the potential product;

determining an affordability probability, the affordability probability being the probability that the potential customer is willing to pay for the potential product;

determining an availability probability, the availability probability being the

5 probability that the potential product is available to the potential user.